2:Evans-Pritchard E-5 (1936) 1949
FL11 Luo FL11

613
614 Kavirondo, between the different lineages, sometimes betwen a lineage of the dominant clan and sometimes between two stranger lineages.

613 In the past there seems to have been no serious difficulty about land;
614 there was plenty of it and more could be acquired by war and migration.
609 People were glad, I was told, to welcome strangers who added to the fighting strength of their community and who provided them with wives
578 for their sons. The strangers settled as *orce*, in-laws, and become maternal uncles and sisters' sons. Personal relations between the members of the lineage of the dominant clan and the strangers who settled among them and intermarried with them were all of a kinship order. But these relationships of a kinship kind are structural points at which affiliated lineages are grafted on to the tree of descent of the dominant clan. Personal relations give place to structural relations. People do not readily quarrel with their own parents-in-law or maternal uncles or sisters' sons about land, but when the pressure of population becomes acute they may dispute with those who count as lineage in-laws, lineage maternal uncles, or lineage sisters' sons, that is to say when the relationship has become a structural one and ceased to be one of an intimate kinship kind, for intermarriage and thereby the formation of new kinship links between a lineage and another living on its land must for reasons of exogamy become less and less. There is a bit difference between a member of the JoSeje lineage of Alego and a man of a stranger lineage whom he calls sister's son in a personal sense and a man whom he calls sister's son in a structural sense.

[178] Hence we find to-day in the overcrowed tribal areas considerable inter-lineage enmity about land. If it is not a new feature of Luo life it has certainly been accentuated by European rule and restrictions. Tribal cohesion has suffered from peace and land hunger has increased disharmony.

613 The *jopiny* claim the land in virtue of their ownership of the tribal
614 territory and point to their *gundini*, their ancient homestead sites, which are remembered for many generations, and to the graves of their ances-
578 tors in the disputed area. But stranger lineages which have grown numerous and powerful may also claim to be *jopiny* in the same area in that
423 they have resided there for many generations and also can point there to their ancestral homestead sites and the graves of their forebears. Sometimes a second stranger lineage have grown strong at the expense of a first and pushed them off their lands, so that three lineages can lay claim to the district. Problems of this kind were arousing much feeling in Alego during my visit, for there land is becoming scarce. They may be further complicated by the fact that the present dominant clan has in the past ousted a clan once dominant in the territory and who also have in the land their homestead sites and graves, for it is held by all Luo that title deeds to lands are ancient homestead sites and ancestral graves and that a man has a right to ask for land to cultivate in the district where his ancestors lived and are buried. This does not mean that a man can come back from the tribal area in which his family have lived for several generations to that in which his earlier forebears lived and claim the land

593 ous parents to make his contribution to the family hut tax. The most unruly elements, again speaking generally, are these lads when they return to the Reserves, though some of them come back much benefitted in every way so far as one can tell.

PROVISION FOR THE AGED:

888 There is nothing in the social life of the Luo in the way of organized old age relief. The aged look to the younger members of ●178 the family to support them. In days gone by when there was no Hut and Poll Tax, and when all the clothing needed was a goatskin, all that the younger members had to provide was food and shelter, with an occasional fee to the medicine man, in the case of illness. Even funerals, when the aged died, were simpler than now. If the parents outlived their offspring there was always the wider circle of the sub-clan or clan to appeal to. And outside the clan were the relations-in-law, upon whom many more claims are made than is customary with us.

But, now, the whole problem of the support of the aged is vastly more difficult, and this in spite of the fact that health measures are beginning to increase the chances of the younger elements surviving [166] to adult life. As against this can be offset the fact that many of the younger members of a family leave the Reserves and remain away for years, and indeed some never are heard of again. Also, there is more than a tendency for the younger generation to go its own way, and commit itself to a more civilized mode of life. There is a definite cleavage between the lives of the younger and the older generations. This is accompanied by weakening ties of common interest and filial duty.

888 Under our regime, and particularly under our system of hut tax, 178 we have driven a wedge into the solidarity of family life which has 651 given a grievous blow to the foundations upon which community life rests. The old are felt to be a burden as never before in the history of the Luo. It is inevitable that more and more burdens should be placed upon the younger elements in tribal life, but we have added to them with, in many cases, a certain element of ruthlessness which is very keenly felt and resented. I quote one instance of what I mean. An old couple in the Reserves with two sons, one a ne'er-do-well a worthless fellow, a jailbird. The other son just rising Poll Tax age. The old couple lived in a rather tumble-down hut, and were known as having no resources, no cattle, sheep or goats. A few fowls formed their "wealth." The old father, while by no means decrepit, was long since past the stage when he could cultivate extensively or go out wage-earning. The old mother had indifferent health, and at times could hardly drag herself back from the well with the pot of

888 178 651 water. The young son could not find employment and was wandering about trying to scrape together the money for his poll tax. Upon the father came the demand for hut tax. He had no money and could not pay. Next year another demand was made, this time for the current year and for that of the previous year. Again he could not pay. The third year he was dunned for three hut taxes, and as he was unable to pay his hut was confiscated to Government, the door was sealed up, and his aged wife driven to seek shelter among neighbours. Homeless, the old man made a frantic effort amongst his relations, who were already liable to pay their own dues, and by dint of much supplication managed to get enough to satisfy the tax for the first of the three years, whereupon his hut was unsealed. Is it any wonder that the younger generation regard the aged as a liability as never before? Demands for hut tax upon the penurious aged is one of the greatest solvents of filial affection in the Reserves to-day, for the burden falls largely on the young.

11: Hartmann M-5 (ca. 1920)1928 FL11 Luo FL11

764 Since the Administration of the country by the "White Man" these wars
721 are a thing of the past. However, the old custom remains, in so far, that even at
178 present on the morning after a person's death his relations and tribesmen have a sham-fight, at the same places where formerly they used to fight their real wars.

764 The wailing at a person's death spreads the news in no time, and at day-break all the men of that tribe attire themselves in their wardress, after having smeared themselves with oker and mud, and go out with their shields and spears. They gather at the kraal of the deceased, and having brought some cattle they go out to the uninhabited boundary of their district for their sham-fight.

There the performance starts with the killing of a chicken as a sacrifice to the gods, that they might favour and bless their war, just as they did in the days of old. Whilst the old folks roast and eat the chicken the warriors dash forward to their imaginary enemy here and there stabbing a tuft of grass or throwing their spears in a bush, and rushing back again as if the enemy was on their heels.

When after an hour or two of fighting the enemy is defeated, they go back to the village of deceased. From the moment he gave up his ghost (and sometimes before that) the people of the village have been bewailling him, running in and out of the hut, shouting and yelling all the time. They have also taken his cattle one by one to the doorway of his hut, that they too might bewail their deceased master.

And now, after the warriors have returned, the corpse is put in front of the hut. The warriors and the people of the surrounding country (sometimes thousands of them, if deceased was a chief, a witchdoctor, a rainmaker, or other important personage) go up to the corpse, and bewail it, running in and out and round the kraal, all of them yelling like madmen.

The warriors also take their "spoils" up to the corpse, to show the spirit of deceased that his death has been revenged.

Whilst this is going on three men are digging the grave. If he was a rich man, i. e. if he had many wives, the grave is dug next to the hut in which he died, after a small temporary hut has been built over the spot. If he had only few wives then the grave is dug inside the hut in which he died. The corpse is lowered in the grave by 4 men, and the children of the village with their hands and feet scrape the earth into the grave, always with their backs towards the same. After the actual burial the wailing goes on for another half hour or so, whereupon all the outsiders return home.

In the evening the people of the kraal go to the grave with a chicken, which, held by the legs, is smitten with its head on the grave till it is dead. Then it is roasted and eaten. They also put a broken cooking pot on the grave, which they trample to pieces there. Then they kill a sheep, which is eaten by the men that night. Its skin is cut into narrow strips. These are tied round the right wrist of all the male inhabitants of the kraal, and round the left wrist of all the females. This finishes the ceremonies for the day.

765 Next morning arrangements are made in the open space outside the village for a dance. The older women beat a couple of drums, the young women and girls from the neighbourhood dance, the men and boys in their war-costume run about

Besides dowry payments the Luo had other means of obtaining cattle before the advent of the Europeans. Two of these ways, which no longer exist, were the capturing of enemies' cattle during inter-tribal wars and robbery during the night. Because there were only few cattle in those days the number of cattle paid for dowries was very limited, not even half of what it is today.

Inheritance and exchange are now the natural means by which the Luo obtain cattle. As mentioned above in discussing dowry the first eight to twelve cattle paid for a dowry, though nominally known as the property of the father of the girl, are in the real sense the inheritance of her full brothers. The father can do anything he likes with them during his life-time, provided he consults the girl's eldest brother. It frequently happens that there is disagreement between the sons and the father, who may try to dispose of these animals without consulting the sons. The other animals belong to certain individuals, e.g., father, uncles and mother. Those of the father if he is a polygamist are inherited by one of his sons who has no sisters. If the father has two or more sisterless sons born of different mothers they inherit equally the special cattle he gets from the dowry of those daughters who have full brothers. These sons also inherit the cattle, goats or sheep that he gets by other means, e.g., those obtained by exchanging millet or maize and those paid to him for the dowries of his nieces. Cattle paid to the mother-in-law by her son-in-law are inherited by her eldest or last son. Usually a father gives more to a son whose mother has died if he is a good son. He calls this son his orphan. If a father loves one of his sons more than the others he may take some of his cattle to one or other of his friends, and tell him that they can only be taken after his death by the loved son.

A man inherits his brother's animals if the brother dies and leaves no son. If a man, having a brother, dies before having children by his wife, and the widow marries someone else of her husband's clan, children born to her by her new husband belong to the brother of her former husband, and so, if they are girls, the brother inherits most of the cattle paid for their dowries. If, however, these girls have a brother, he inherits the cattle.

Some people start to obtain cattle by exchanging their millet or maize for sheep, goats and poultry in the first instance, and when the number of these small stock has increased, they, in turn, are exchanged for cattle. Sometimes a man gives his friend an assurance that if he gives him some goats he will in return give a heifer which can be kept until she calves. After weaning, the calf remains the property of the friend while the cow is returned.

14: Johnston G-4, 5 (no date) 1904 FL11 Luo FL11

101 174 inhabited Northern Unyoro (where a fragment of them remains), and that the Bahima and their Bantu subjects drove this branch of the Nilotic people across the Albert Nile to the north-west (where they remain as the Aluru) and into Busoga (across the Victoria Nile) on the south-east. From Busoga they appear to have been driven on by the Bantu right through the Kavirondo country until they finally settled and throve round the shores of Kavirondo Bay, where they at present bear the name of Ja-luo or Nyifwa. It is a remarkable fact that the Ja-luo to this day are

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497. A RAFT MADE OF PAPYRUS REEDS, WHITE NILE

called by their Bantu neighbours "Abanyoro," which would indicate that this theory of their origin is correct.

361 The Ja-luo reside in fixed villages of from ten to fifty huts, which are surrounded by hedges of aloe and euphorbia. Formerly they built mud [178] or stone walls round their settlements in imitation of the Bantu Kavirondo to the north. But this is a custom which has now died out. The houses [342] are similar in appearance to those of the Bantu tribes around them, as is the arrangement about the two fireplaces. Young unmarried girls usually 513 sleep together in one large hut under the care of an old woman. The 882 young men and boys of the village also sleep by themselves, generally

17: Southall E-5 (1946-1947) 1952 FL11 Luo FL11

originate all the larger lineages which provide the political framework of Luo society.

My illustrations of Luo lineage structure are taken from material on one large lineage group, that of Karachuonyo. This group inhabits the present locations of Karachuonyo and Kasipul, and in 19[illegible] had a population of 90,000. I lived here from December 1946 till March 194[illegible] for the month of September 1947. On each occasion I took with me [illegible] from Makerere College as interpreter and research assistant. I [illegible] my material with a dozen or more of the Luo students at Makere[illegible] themselves came from a number of different locations. Clearly, from such a [illegible] period in the field, my results are not complete, but in so far as they add to the information at present available, I present them for what they are worth. The map (Fig. 3) shows all the Luo locations of South Kavirondo, those of the Karachuonyo group and of the other lineages which claim descent from the common ancestors, Jook and his wife Awandu, being shown in heavy type.

III. THE FAMILY

The most prominent cultural features of the Luo landscape are the euphorbia hedges, at stages of growth varying from that of 3-foot saplings to that of 30-foot trees, dating each site by their planting at the time of first occupation, and throwing a thick green wall round the cluster of huts within. This residential unit is the *dala* or *pacho*, and will be referred to as the homestead. The dwelling-huts ranged in a circle round the inside of the hedge are those of married women, the chief wife's hut being at the side opposite to the entrance through the hedge, and the huts of subsequent wives arranged in alternate succession on either side of that of the chief wife.[1] The husband and head of the homestead divides his time between the huts of his wives, the chief wife's hut taking precedence,[2] having no other quarters of his own except an *ebila*, a smaller hut usually in the centre of the circle, which was his only place of privacy. There is a belief that if the husband leaves the homestead to escape from the bickering of his wives he will die on re-entering it, and the *ebila* provides him with a safer sanctuary. It was also a vantage point from which he could keep a watchful eye on his cattle in the nearby kraal. The homestead is the spatial correlate of the compound polygynous family and is subdivided into the households of its component elementary families. Just as *dala* or *pacho* applies both figuratively to the social group and concretely to the homestead occupied by it, so *ot* applies both to house and to the household of wife and children occupying it. The title of the head of the homestead and its family group is *wuon dala* or *wuon pacho*; *jadong'* (elder) may be substituted for *wuon*. Correspondingly, each wife is *wuon ot*, signifying that she is head of the household, proprietress of its hut and all other effects, and leader of its domestic and economic activities. The word *wuon* is usually translated as 'father', and is in fact the classificatory term for all agnates of the generation senior to the speaker, including the 'genitor'. But its use with reference to all married women,

[1] See Gluckman in *African Systems of Kinship and Marriage*, ed. Radcliffe-Brown and Forde. The Lozi family has a "house-property complex" of the Zulu type but in a less extreme form.

[2] This is often striking in detail. The husband's most valuable possessions are also kept there. With the present changes in hut design the chief wife's hut is often of the new and more permanent rectangular pattern, while a second wife's may also be rectangular but smaller, and the third wife's still of the traditional circular type.

17: Southall E-5 (1946-1947) 1952 FL11 Luo FL11

to his home and continue to live in the *simbu*, the bride not cooking on her own, but in the veranda of her mother-in-law's hut, and her food not being eaten by her husband (who continues to eat his mother's food) but only by the young men. Later still the ceremony of *riso* is performed, which is considered a final confirmation of the marriage contract by the two families. However, further ceremonies follow, in which the husband gives his father-in-law the bull of *alieb* and his mother-in-law the goat of *saw thondo*. Then the father-in-law settles upon his daughter the heifer of *atako*, a bull, two goats, and a hoe, in token that he now gives up all claim upon his daughter as long as the marriage continues. Eventually husband and wife move out of the *simbu* into a new hut built for her by him, and she begins to cook on her own and he to eat her food. The sequence of ceremonies associated with marriage is thus complicated and protracted. There is no specified time schedule, but the bride may have given birth several times before they are concluded.

Less prestige attaches to the form of marriage contracted by a man and woman without prior formal approval from their respective families. This occurred in the past if a girl was made pregnant in the *simbu* and was sent straight to her lover, or on the elopement of a married woman with her adulterer, or on the remarriage of a divorced woman. This type of marriage is becoming very common today, when adherence to traditional ritual is lax, and when the young are able with impunity to short-cut both the tedious formalities and the great expenses of the most approved form of marriage. In this form of marriage cattle are still claimed by the bride's father, or by the former husband in the case of divorce and remarriage, but they are fewer in number. The essential differences from the first type of marriage are that the bride loses her virginity before any sort of marriage negotiation has taken place between the two families, and the contract eventually made between them is a recognition of a *fait accompli* instead of the careful planning of a mutually approved match.

A dead man's widows are normally taken up by his kinsmen at the final ceremonies of the funeral, a year or more after the death. These kinsmen are nearly always husband's brothers or stepsons to the widows and they would certainly never be kinsmen from outside the dead man's minimal class A lineage; but the Luo do not consciously relate the matter of widow inheritance to a specific grade of lineage. Among their husband's close kinsmen widows are allowed considerable freedom of choice. It was considered desirable that a man should replace a wife who had died, or a wife who was barren, by a sister of hers, which he could usually do for an amount of bridewealth far smaller than that of the original marriage. Ritual offences rather than infidelities were considered grounds for divorce. If the wife was judged guilty the husband claimed back the bridewealth cattle, less deductions of one head for the wife's work during the marriage, two for each girl, and three for each boy born of it, and others to replace those consumed in the marriage ceremonies. But if the husband was at fault he might be prevented from claiming any cattle back by a brother demanding the woman in his stead.

As has been stated, the cattle of a homestead are all herded together, but there are clearly recognized divisions in the ownership of the herd. There are three main categories: the cattle owned by the father, the cattle owned by his wives, and the cattle held in trust by them for the marriages of their sons. Though the father cannot interfere with the two latter categories except by agreement, he is regarded none the

19:Wilson E-5 (ca. 1950) 1960
FL11 Luo FL11

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HOMICIDE AND SUICIDE AMONG THE JOLUO OF KENYA

G. M. WILSON

101 THE LUO ("Jaluo," singular; "Joluo," plural) are unique in that they are the only Nilotic speaking people in Kenya. Their place of origin is the Nile Valley; through the centuries by gradual expansion by war and peaceful penetration, they migrated up the Nile Valley, through Uganda, into Kenya, along the shores of Lake Victoria. The term Luo means "swamp" and Joluo "the people of the swamp." Through their migrations they have left behind other Nilotic groups in Uganda and in the Sudan.

131 The Joluo are chiefly concentrated in Central Nyanza where over half a million of them are found today. There are, however, Luo pockets in North Nyanza and also in South Nyanza.

631 The Luo of Central Nyanza are divided into twelve tribal groups. Each tribal group, with a Government-appointed chief, today forms an administrative unit, a "Location," within the District of Central Nyanza. These administrative units, laid down in the early twenties, coincide fairly accurately with the former tribal boundaries and are accepted by the people.

614 Each Luo tribe can be described as a society of agnatic parallel lineages or clans, each tracing either real or mythical descent from a common eponym or descent through an adopted or affiliated family to the eponym.

614 The original form of the clan and lineage structure remains
178 today in comparative purity. The Joluo people—although on the surface they have accepted Christianity—still retain the ceremonial, religious, and ritual aspects of their culture to a very large degree.

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19:Wilson E-5 (ca. 1950) 1960
FL11 Luo FL11

614 very large degree. Their family system remains strong and
●178 largely unimpaired by the impact of Western civilization. The patriarch of the extended family unit, the *jokakuoro*, remains the local authority. Because a series of family groups together form a territorial unit, the sub-clan, the strength and solidity of the Luo family and lineage structure remain supreme. Obviously there have been changes. Basically, however, the changes are superficial.

562 The role of women in Luo society is a subordinate one. Indigenously they play no part in the major ceremonies or rituals and have never had political authority. They do not organize in age groups or societies as in other cultures, and remain primarily the property of their father and his lineage or, on marriage, the property of their husband and his clan.

595 Polygyny is still the ideal and goal of the majority of Luo men. A recent village survey showed that taking a sample of 744 homesteads, which varied between a simple monogamous family and the very large unit of the extended polygamous family, 55 per cent were monogamous units, of which 9 per cent had a leviratic wife or wives, thus making them socially polygamous units; 45 per cent were polygamous homesteads, of which 11 per cent had a leviratic wife or wives. Only 27 per cent of the total sample were found to be simple monogamous households, that is one in four of the family type associated with Western culture: a man, his wife and children. The remainder were either polygamous or had leviratic wives or were of the extended family type. Of this 27 per cent, moreover, it was the ideal of the vast majority to become polygamous later.

871 Education among the Joluo has increased rapidly in recent years, and it was found in our sample that 63 per cent of the boys of school age were either at school or had been to school for more than one year. The figure was 30 per cent for the girls. Of the adult males, however, only 28 per cent had been to school, and of the married females, only 7 per cent. The standard attained, moreover, was not high. More than half the male

19:Wilson E-5 (ca. 1950) 1960
FL11 Luo FL11

was given his name reveals their attempt to avoid the consequences of his act.

The second case arises from a breach of customary law which in the old days would have meant banishment but which today brings social ostracism.

Suicide Case No. 2.

The suicide was caught in the act of intercourse with his full brother's wife. The Luo believe that such an act involving members of the same *Jokamio* (that is, those descended from the same mother or grandmother) brings *chiew* to the whole clan. The security and solidarity of family relationships are threatened by the act because it involves quarrels which may lead to violence within the primary segment of the clan. In this case the brother did not tell the elders of the clan but merely threatened to do so. The guilty man returned to his own homestead and hanged himself in his hut. The house was destroyed and members of the extended family were cleansed by the *jo-bilo*. The cleansing ceremony took the same form as in the first case, with the addition that the village was sprinkled with medicine in order that it might continue to be used by the dead man's family.

In the next case there are two clear motives which led to the suicide. The first, perhaps the most important, lies in indigenous beliefs and attitudes, while the second lies in more modern attitudes.

Suicide Case No. 3.

This Luo was about 30 years old and had been employed as a driver for the Government for many years. Drivers in Kenya receive a relatively high salary, and in addition some take advantage of their position and make extra money by illegally charging people for transportation. Through these activities, he became a relatively rich man and was able to marry a total of five wives at his comparatively young age. He was also wealthy

20:Ominde I-5 (ca. 1948) 1952
FL11 Luo FL11

153 such circumstances they have to depend on their mothers' milk.

Although the time and nature of her work may force a woman to feed her child at certain hours, there is otherwise no fixed time for feeding babies. If the mother is present, the child is suckled whenever it wants to. Thus babies having such treatment grow up with a particularly strong liking for their mothers' breasts. As soon as a baby is big enough, the mother begins to limit her suckling and to increase the frequency of gruel-taking. The frequency of suckling is greater for babies between one and three months, the intervals increasing with the age of the child. Daily absence of the mother when she is working at a distance may also impose longer intervals between the successive sucklings than would be the case if the mother were nearby, or within the village. Chil-
[177] dren in more enlightened families are started on cow's milk after one or two months, and are given gruel after six months.

There is a widespread belief that gruel strengthens the bones, and therefore should be a very important article of diet just before the child begins to walk.

Cleanliness

154 There is a general slackness in the washing of children by Luo mothers, which increases as the children grow older, but sometimes, especially among the more ad-
[178] vanced people, they are kept tidy regularly. It may be of interest to know that, in the past, they were washed early every morning in cold water in the belief that this would make them strong. Whenever the children empty their bowels they are cleaned with old rags or soft leaves. The limited supply of old rags makes the use of leaves more common.

Bedding and clothes. No clothes are especially made for the babies.

20:Orninde 1-5 (ca. 1948) 1952
FL11 Luo FL11

883 On the whole, girls dislike those men whose chief object
864 is sexual satisfaction. Their caution is often the result of
881 talks on the nature of sexual relationship which girls hold in their communal sleeping places, and with older women.

When newly-married women return to their maternal homes, they freely discuss among themselves—especially during sleeping hours—their experiences with their husbands. This affords an opportunity for the unmarried adolescent girl to obtain first-hand information on the nature of relationships in married life.

883 *Opportunities for contact.* The normal first meeting between girls and those with whom they may have sexual relations, takes place by conscious or deliberate arrangements made by the parties concerned, at marriage ceremonies or in public places like market centres or towns. They first make each other's acquaintance somewhere between the girl's and the man's house, particularly when the two live in close proximity. These are distinguished from any other meetings in that they are arranged between the male friends and the older adolescent girls or those on the threshold of adolescence.

The meetings which take place during marriage ceremonies are observed with great interest by girls of the nursing age, who watch the older girls' behaviour towards their men friends with keen curiosity. In many instances introductions are managed through the brothers of the girls. Introductions resulting in marriage
894 may also come about through a girl first acquainting
889 herself with sisters who introduce their brother to her. Brothers of adolescent girls would, like all members of the family, disapprove of a prolonged friendship without any sign of betrothal and would do all they could to persuade the girl to look for another friend.

881 *Sex education of adolescent girls.* Girls in the old tradi-
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20:Orninde I-5 (ca. 1948) 1952
FL11 Luo FL11

tional society had a more deliberate or conscious sex education than they receive in modern times. Instruction on the nature of sexual relationship was formerly given by an old woman of the village, whose hut served as a communal sleeping place for the girls. This old woman was one who must have stopped giving birth to children. She was either a grandmother or an elder wife in a polygamous homestead. The communal sleeping places are still a feature of the girls' environment, but many of the modern huts have no experienced woman in them; hence the girls have lost their former source of instruction on both the marital and the following day-to-day relationships.

The change from the traditional type of sex education has forced girls approaching marriage to seek information elsewhere. At present they usually make enquiries of experienced married women living in their neighbourhood. Beyond a few cautious warnings, mothers are rarely known to take part in the sex education of their daughters while fathers are completely detached from this field of enquiry.

Sex activities in the communal sleeping places. Talks on sex are not the only activities engaged in by adolescent girls in their sleeping places. In some areas they also receive nocturnal visits from young men who have failed to find suitable opportunities to meet them during the day. This is not a widely spread practice, however, which may be due partly to the strict morality imposed by Christian moral conventions.

Sometimes the girls themselves make arrangements to welcome these visitors by night, remaining awake in order to open the door for the men with whom they have made the appointment. Sometimes this form of visit is also carried out by young men without the girls' consent, but if they are discovered, a great outcry is

20:Ominde I-5 (ca. 1948) 1952
FL11 Luo FL11

883 raised against such raiders. It is considered a disgrace to
836 be discovered as an accomplice in raids on the girls' sleeping quarters.

On attaining Maturity

881 The attainment of maturity among girls is marked by
178 the first onset of menstruation. In the past this was kept very secret until several periods had been experienced, and even now its first occurrence is kept secret. Formerly, early preparations were made for it by instructing the girls about the physical changes involved.

The information regarding this important physiological happening used to be given by the old woman in whose hut the girls slept. At present the information is obtained largely from experienced women with whom the girls associate. In the past there was no initiation ceremony to celebrate the event, and today the position
[584] remains the same. Although the betrothal of a girl could
[582] take place as early as ten, the social attitude was and still is that girls should not be handed over to their husbands before attaining maturity. Even when the mutual handing over took place before this age, the girl was obliged to live in the home of some older woman until the advent of menstruation. It is still believed that premature marriage results in great weakness to the girl.

882 *The social position of a girl on reaching maturity.* The
[732] social position of the newly-mature girl is vague and uncertain. Any abnormality of mind, character or body, is
[582] a source of anxiety to her family. Moreover, as most girls marry between sixteen and eighteen, there is a tendency for ill-wishers to over-state the ages of girls above that limit, because the attitude of society towards them is similar to that adopted towards overdue goods. Those who fail to marry at an early age thus become
589 subjects of scorn. So strong is the pressure exerted by
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20:Ominde I-5 (ca. 1948) 1952
FL11 Luo FL11

source of much social rejoicing to discover that a married woman had been found to be a virgin. Such a bride was given a high prestige among the other women.

In the past, if a woman gave birth to an illegitimate child, her only chance of marriage was to an old man with a number of wives. There was no possibility of occupying the position of chief wife of the family; and the heads of cattle paid were much fewer. The child was taken by the man who legally married her, but she was not allowed to give birth in her own home. Everything was done to get rid of her as soon as possible.

Examples of such pregnancies are very common at present. But although social disapproval is still keenly felt, modern conditions have become more favourable to women in this situation, and an increasing number of them are being married to bachelors. Unlike some communities, no death punishment was ever given. If the occurrence takes place between close relatives the matter is kept secret; in the past, however, the couple could be exiled.

Modern Education and Adolescent Girls

Progress in the education of adolescent girls is hampered because the Luo people do not appreciate its suitability to the environment of their women. To the majority, modern education is associated with clerical work and the many other jobs that men take up after a school career. The position of girls in this scheme is not clearly envisaged.

The social importance attached to marriage is having to adapt itself to a prolonged school career and the raised age for marriage which this implies. An inability to appreciate schooling for girls is also based on a high esteem for the traditional education which it tends to interrupt and weaken.

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BETROTHAL AND MARRIAGE CUSTOMS

Preliminary Considerations

One difference between the older traditional kind of marriage and marriage as it is conducted nowadays lies in the part played by relatives to make the venture a success. Individual initiative was formerly negligible, the greater part of the marriage negotiations being undertaken by the relatives of both parties. This had the effect of reducing the importance of the bridegroom whose initiative gave way to a dependence upon the good will of his relations to whom the task of negotiation was left.

At present the tendency in marriage is towards individualism, although it is still a matter where society plays a considerable part. But since the individual man and woman are taking a greater part in deciding whom they shall marry, there is now a greater opportunity to develop an attachment genuinely based upon love. Steps are still usually taken, however, to ensure that the man's family has sufficient wealth to pay a satisfactory dowry, and the co-operation of the society in which the girl lives is needed if the relationship is to be successfully established. Great care is also taken to see that the marriage of the couple would not go against the normal stratification of relationships already in existence.

The marriage of a member of A-B family to C-D family* excludes the children of C and H from intermarrying with any member of the lineage of the maternal grandparents. So long as connection with the

*See diagram on p. 44

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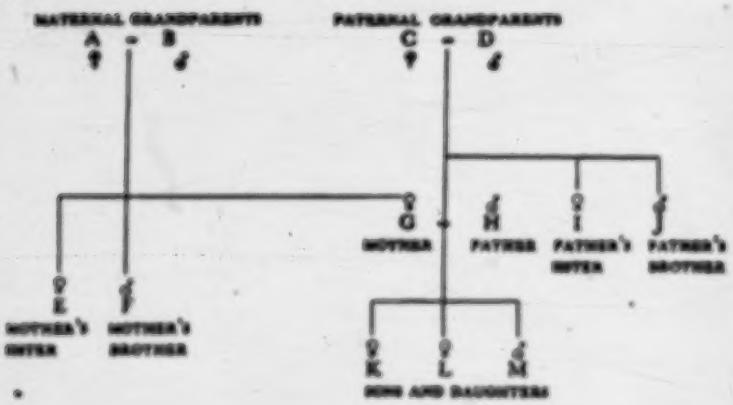

maternal grandparents can be traced, descendants of G-H family will not marry the person concerned.

But E may be married to H's brother and *I* too may marry E's brother. Should F's son wish to marry from the community in which G has been married it would be G who would take the responsibility of looking for a young woman from among the daughters of her brothers-in-law and not from among her sisters-in-law. In the same way, the sons of G's brothers-in-law cannot marry any of G's sisters or sisters by relation (daughters of her uncles). The method of acting through a relative in establishing a marriage connection is still in use, although personal initiative is increasingly taking its place.

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The Position of a Betrothed Woman

The life of a betrothed woman presents a busy time of conflicting and disturbing news. Information of much discomfort to both parties comes and goes and is forgotten. To the girl such information is of great importance, and her attitude is often affected by it. Each time a

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584 on their own initiative, the object being to familiarise
881 them with the relationship between husband and wife and with the prospective husband's moods and to establish a good understanding. At this time there is no instruction on the care of babies, such knowledge being acquired after the woman has given birth.

871 The difference between the traditional training of
• 178 brides and their modern education, even in its elemen-
[881] tary stages, is tremendous. While traditional education is constantly weakening, modern education tends to develop along its own independent lines, omitting rather than assisting those elements it is intended to improve. It is likely that a stronger foundation could be built through modern education if the latter paid more heed to those features of community life which most urgently require improvement, but which in themselves provide a groundwork of practical knowledge.

The pace of progress in Luo society is bound to be slow while the sphere of women's life remains still radically conservative. It is arguable that modern education emphasizes literary theory too much, yet the traditional education which stresses practical work from early childhood, gives only a limited time for theory, even in
[881] maturity. However this may be, there is no doubt that there now exists too much ignorance of the requisite knowledge about sex, for girls and young women can be met who plainly profess ignorance on certain fundamental features of the traditional training.

It therefore seems necessary that if education is to be of real use and interest to girls, some features of practical value to society should be included. This presupposes a thorough study of the subject concerned and a wise selection of those elements which would inspire the pupils to improve themselves and the society in which they move.

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512 462 264 [853] [356] *Daily rhythm of family duties.* The daily programme of a mother with a young child is divided into two major phases, corresponding with the morning and the evening meals. In the morning the activities include the preparation of gruel for the child, preceded by suckling it and sweeping the house. When prepared, the gruel is left with a nurse, to be given to the child when it cries. The mother then goes to the field or to any major work of the day. Preparation of the morning meal begins at about 9 a.m., and by 10 a.m. the family disperses again, the men perhaps to herd cattle or to go to market, and the women to fetch firewood or bring water from the river.

[178] The idea of having a meal freshly prepared in the morning is of recent origin. In the past, people ate cold food preserved from the previous evening meal. A great proportion of what is eaten during the week comes from the gardens.

[178] In former days, women were expected to prepare an afternoon gruel for their husbands at about 3 p.m. This is still the custom in some families, but modern women are quite ignorant of the practice in its traditional form.

858 613 *The social attitude towards male and female children.* The difference in the social attitude towards male and female children arises from considering them in relation to the future of the lineage to which they belong. A male child is looked upon as a dynamic element in the lineal structure. On the other hand, a female child, though a potential source of wealth, is regarded as an exporter of fertility from her parents' lineage to the lineage of her husband. Thus, if she becomes the mother [842] of many children, her larger numbers are looked upon [593] with disfavour as taking something away from her original family. This results in a superstitious feeling which affects her visits to the parental home.